

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Matthias Helmstetter

Application No.: 10/690,236

Group No.: 3616

Filed: October 21, 2003

Examiner: B.J. Gooden, Jr.

For: **GAS BAG MODULE AND VEHICLE STEERING WHEEL COMPRISING
SUCH GAS BAG MODULE**

Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF
(PATENT APPLICATION—37C.F.R. 1.192)**

1. Transmitted herewith, in triplicate, is the APPEAL BRIEF in this application, with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on March 13, 2007

NOTE: "Appellant must, within two months from the date of the notice of appeal under § 1.191 or within the time allowed for reply to the action from which the appeal was taken, if such time is later, file a brief in triplicate."
... 37 C.F.R. § 1.192(a) (emphasis added).

2. STATUS OF APPLICANT

This application is on behalf of

☒ other than a small entity.☐ a small entity.

A statement

☐ is attached.☐ was already filed.**CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 CFR §§ 1.8(a) and 1.10***

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Date: May 14, 2007Deborah Denn

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*Only the date of filing (§ 1.6) will be the date used in a patent term adjustment calculation, although the date on any certificate of mailing or transmission under § 1.8 continues to be taken into account in determining timeliness. See § 1.703(f). Consider "Express Mail Post Office Addressee" (§ 1.10) or facsimile transmission (§ 1.6(d)) for the reply to be accorded the earliest possible filing date for patent term adjustment calculations.

3. FEE FOR FILING APPEAL BRIEF

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.17(c), the fee for filing the Appeal Brief is:

- ☐ small entity \$250.00
☒ other than a small entity \$500.00

Appeal Brief fee due \$500.00

4. EXTENSION OF TERM

NOTE: 37 C.F.R. § 1.740(b) "...an applicant shall be deemed to have failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude processing or examination of an application for the cumulative total of any periods of time in excess of three months that are taken to reply to any notice or action by the Office making any rejection, objection, argument, or other request, measuring such three-month period from the date the notice or action was mailed or given to the applicant, in which case the period of adjustment set forth in § 1.703 shall be reduced by the number of days, if any, beginning on the date after the date that is three months after the date of mailing or transmission of the Office communication notifying the applicant of the rejection, objection, argument, or other request and ending on the date the reply was filed. The period, or shortened statutory period, for reply that is set in the Office action or notice has not effect on the three-month period set forth in this paragraph."

NOTE: The time periods set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.192(a) are subject to the provision of § 1.136 for patent applications. 37 C.F.R. § 1.191(d). See also Notice of November 5, 1985 (1060 O.G. 27).

NOTE: As the two-month period set in § 1.192(a) for filing an appeal brief is not subject to the six-month maximum period specified in 35 U.S.C. § 133, the period for filing an appeal brief may be extended up to seven months. 62 Fed. Reg. 53,131 at 53,156; 1203 O.G. 63 at 84 (Oct. 10, 1997).

The proceedings herein are for a patent application and the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.136 apply.
(complete (a) or (b), as applicable)

- (a) ☐ Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136
(fees: 37 C.F.R. 1.17(a)(1)-(5)) for the total number of months check below:

Extension (months)	Fee for other than <u>small entity</u>	Fee for <u>small entity</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> one month	\$ 120.00	\$ 60.00
<input type="checkbox"/> two months	\$ 450.00	\$225.00
<input type="checkbox"/> three months	\$ 1,020.00	\$510.00
<input type="checkbox"/> four months	\$ 1,590.00	\$795.00

Fee \$ _____

If an additional extension of time is required, please consider this a petition therefor.

(check and complete the next time, if applicable)

- ☐ An extension for _____ months has already been secured and the fee paid therefor of \$_____ is deducted from the total fee due for the total months of extension now requested.

Extension fee due with this request \$ _____

or

- (b) ☐ Applicant believes that no extension of term is required. However, this conditional petition is being made to provide for the possibility that applicant has inadvertently overlooked the need for a petition for extension of time.

5. TOTAL FEE DUE

The total fee due is:

Appeal brief fee \$500.00 _____

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TOTAL FEE DUE \$500.00 _____

6. FEE PAYMENT

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NOTE: If there is a fee deficiency and there is no authorization to charge an account, additional fees are necessary to cover the additional time consumed in making up the original deficiency. If the maximum, six-month period has expired before the deficiency is noted and corrected, the application is held abandoned. In those instances where authorization to charge is included, processing delays are encountered in returning the papers to the PTO Finance Branch in order to apply these charges prior to action on the cases. Authorization to change the deposit account for any fee deficiency should be checked. See the Notice of April 7, 1986 (1065 O.G. 31-33).

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AND/OR

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SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Matthias Helmstetter
Serial No. : 10/690,236
Filing Date : October 21, 2003
For : GAS BAG MODULE AND VEHICLE
STEERING WHEEL COMPRISING
SUCH GAS BAG MODULE
Group Art Unit : 3616
Examiner : B. J. Gooden Jr.
Attorney Docket No. : TRW(ASG)6800

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

05/15/2007 NGEBREM1 00000075 10690236

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Sir:

Following the Notice of Appeal filed March 13, 2007, Appellants present this
Appeal Brief.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is TRW Automotive Safety Systems GmbH. An assignment of this application to TRW Automotive Safety Systems GmbH was recorded on October 21, 2003, Reel/Frame: 14638/0030.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 3-8, 11 and 16 are currently pending in this application. Claim 11 is allowed. Claims 6 and 16 are objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 3, 5, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,688,638 to Schutz (hereinafter, Schutz). Claims 4 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schutz in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,380,037 to Worrell et al. (hereinafter, Worrell). The rejections of claims 3-5, 7, and 8 are appealed.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

A Response After Final Rejection was filed on November 6, 2006. An Advisory Action dated February 9, 2007 indicated that the Response After Final Rejection was not entered. An Amendment under 37 CFR 41.33 was filed on March 13, 2007. An Advisory Action dated March 29, 2007 indicated that that the Amendment under 37 CFR 41.33 was entered. The Advisory Action dated March 29, 2007 maintained the rejection of claims 3-5, 7, and 8.

V. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Independent claim 3 recites a gas bag module 10 (Figs. 1 and 2) comprising a gas generator 16 and a generator carrier 12, to which the gas generator 16 is fastened (Page 4, lines 7-11). The generator carrier 12 is adapted to be fastened to a vehicle steering wheel 100 (Page 4, lines 15-17 and Fig. 2). The generator carrier 12 has a base section 19 with detent elements 20 formed thereon, by means of which detent elements said generator carrier 12 can be fastened on a steering wheel side (Page 4, lines 15-17 and Fig. 2). The generator carrier 12 comprises a multiple-component plastic 30, 32, which comprises different layers of the carrier 12 (Page 5, lines 14-22). The detent elements 20 comprise the multiple-component plastic 30, 32 (Page 5, lines 18-22).

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

- a. Whether claims 3, 5, and 7 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by Schutz.
- b. Whether claims 4 and 8 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell.

VII. ARGUMENTS

A. Rejection of claims 3, 5, and 7 as being anticipated by Schutz

Anticipation requires a single prior art reference that discloses each element of the claim. W.L. Gore & Associates v. Garlock, Inc., 220 UPSQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983) *cert. denied* 469 U.S. 851 (1984). For a reference to anticipate a claim, “[t]here must be no difference between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure, as viewed by a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention.”

Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech Inc., 18 USPQ2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Additionally, the single prior art reference must disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, arranged as in the claim.

Lindemann Maschinenfabrik GmbH v. American Hoist & Derrick Co., 221 U.S.P.Q. 481, 485 (Fed. Cir. 1984). "There must be no difference between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure, as viewed by a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention". Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech Inc., 18 U.S.P.Q.2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim". Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Schutz does not meet the criteria for an anticipation rejection of claims 3, 5, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) for at least the following reasons:

Schutz does not disclose or suggest detent elements comprising a multiple component plastic, as recited in claim 3. In determining the meaning or interpretation of terms in a claim, intrinsic evidence (i.e, the claims, the written description, and the prosecution history) is first considered. Digital Biometrics, Inc. V. Identix, Inc., 149 F.3d 1335, 1347 47 USPQ2d 1418, 1424 (Fed. Cir. 1998). Further, it is well settled that a patent applicant may be his own lexicographer W.L. Gore & Assocs. V. Garlock, Inc. 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303, 316 (Fed. Cir. 1983), *cert denied*, 469 U.S. 851 (1984). In particular, the specification discloses at page 1, lines 20-23 the following:

"The generator carrier consists at least partially of a multiple-component plastic wherein the components define different layers of the carrier. Thus, various material characteristics of different plastics can be utilized in an optimum manner."

In light of this passage in the specification, the term "multiple component plastic" of claim 3 clearly specifies that the components are two or more different plastic materials and those components can define different layers of the carrier.

The passage in Schutz at column 3, lines 52-60, cited by the Examiner, does not disclose or suggest detent elements comprising a multiple component plastic.

This passage in Schutz discloses that either: 1) the pin 32 can be metallic as shown and can have an insulation on the holding surface 42, or 2) the pin 32 can be plastic and the contact surface be provided with a metallization. The clear wording in Schutz is that of two alternative constructions, neither of which is directed to a pin having a multi component plastic construction. In Schutz, the pin is either insulated metal or plastic with a metalized surface. Schutz makes no mention of a multiple component plastic pin or portion thereof.

The Office action also states in the last sentence of page 5 that "The insulation (42) is provided (Reference is made to Figure 2a) and a metallization is provided on an alternate surface 40". This clearly mischaracterizes what is disclosed by Schutz. Schutz specifically discloses at column 3, lines 53-55, that the pin 32, as shown, is metallic and can have an insulation on the holding surface 42. Thus, Schutz explicitly discloses that Figure 2A shows the pin 32 being metallic with an insulation on the holding surface 42. Schutz goes on further to state that, alternatively, it is conceivable to construct the pin 32 with plastic and to provide the contact surface 40 with a metallization". Schutz explicitly discloses these as two

mutually exclusive constructions. To combine these constructions as proposed in the Office Action goes against what is explicitly taught by Schutz and is clearly the product of impermissible hindsight reconstruction.

Also, in Schutz, the pin serves the purpose of being an electrical contact for a vehicle horn switch. Thus, both designs disclosed in Schutz require an electrically conductive component. In the first design, the pin is metal with an insulator for the non-contact portions of the pin. In the second design, the plastic pin is fit with a metallization in the area of the switch contact portion of the pin. Thus, to construe Schutz as disclosing a multiple-component plastic pin is in opposition to the explicit teachings of Schutz. A multiple component plastic pin cannot serve as a contact for a vehicle horn switch. Moreover, in the embodiment in Schutz where the plastic pin is fit with a metallization in the switch contact portion, an insulating material is unnecessary because the plastic pin itself provides the necessary insulation.

Also, at column 3, lines 58-61, Schutz teaches that the plastic pin is particularly advantageous where the carrier is also plastic so that the pin and the carrier can be molded together in one operating step. If the housing 22 and pin 32 of Schutz are molded in one operating step, one skilled in the art would certainly appreciate that, as with typical or normal molding processes, a single mold would be used to form both the carrier and the detent pin with one molten plastic material. Thus, both the carrier and detent pin would have to be the same material in order for the pin to be molded on the carrier in one step. Therefore, Schutz clearly does not teach or suggest a multiple component plastic pin.

Moreover, the Examiner's argument that the plastic pin of Schutz would still necessitate a holding surface of a material designed to limit rattling and noise

amounts to speculation at best. Schutz does not teach or suggest the need for the holding surface to be constructed of a different material in the plastic pin embodiment. In fact, the explicit teachings of Schutz make it quite clear that rattling and noise are addressed through the spring force urging the spring wire against the holding surface, not through a second plastic component used to form the holding surface. The passage cited by the Examiner at column 3, lines 18-26, makes this very clear:

“Between the gas bag module 12 and the steering wheel skeleton 10, spring elements 56 are provided, which are illustrated in FIG. 1 as compression springs. The compression springs 56 exert a force on the gas bag module 12 so that the spring wire 52 lies free of play against the holding surface 42 when the horn is not actuated. With this, a basic position is established and the gas bag module 12 is prevented from rattling and causing disturbing noises whilst traveling.”

No reference is made to a second or different plastic component used to form the holding surface 42 of Schutz to prevent rattling. Rather, the springs 56 prevent rattling of the gas bag module 12 by exerting a force on the gas bag module 12 so that the spring wire 52 lies free of play against the holding surface 42. One having ordinary skill in the art would clearly see that the prevention of rattling is addressed by Schutz and, thus, there is no need for such an improvement.

Therefore, in view of the above-mentioned reasons, the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) is improper and should be reversed. Claim 3 is therefore allowable. Claims 5 and 7 depend from claim 3. Thus, the rejection of claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) should also be reversed.

B. Rejection of claim 4 as being obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell. For reasons set forth below, this rejection is improper and should be reversed.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). 35 U.S.C. § 103 forbids issuance of a patent when “the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.” In making a determination of obviousness under 35 U.S.C.

§103(a):

...the scope and contents of the prior art are determined; the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue are to be ascertained; and the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art resolved. Against this background, the obviousness of the subject matter is determined. Such secondary considerations as commercial success, long felt but unsolved needs, failure of others, etc., might be utilized to give light to the circumstances surrounding the origin of the subject matter sought to be patented. Graham v. John Deere, 383 U.S. 1, 17-18, 86 S. Ct. 684, 15 L. Ed. 2d 545 (1966).

Rejections on obviousness grounds cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, *there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness.* KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 2007 U.S. Lexis 4745, 36-37; 75 U.S.L.W. 4289 (2007) (emphasis added), *citing In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977, 988 (CA Fed. 2006).

As set forth above in section VII(A) with regard to claim 3, the recitation of a “multiple-component plastic” clearly specifies that the components are two or more

different plastic materials and that those components can define different layers of the carrier. Claim 4 recites that the multiple-component plastic comprises a carrier material and a coating. Schutz and Worrell do not teach or suggest this structure and the Examiner has set forth no articulated reasoning with any rational underpinning to support the conclusion of obviousness.

Schutz does not disclose a multiple-component plastic. As set forth above in section VII(A), Schutz discloses that the pin can be either metallic with an insulation on the holding surface or plastic with a metallization on the contact surface. The clear wording in Schutz is that of two alternative constructions, neither of which is directed to a pin having a multi component plastic construction. In Schutz, the pin is either: 1) insulated metal or 2) plastic with a metallized surface. Schutz makes no mention whatsoever of a multiple-component plastic pin or portion thereof.

Worrell does not cure this deficiency. In rejecting claim 4, the Examiner states that a multiple-component plastic is disclosed in Worrell at 18 and 20. Items 18 and 20 are, however, clearly identified in Worrell as being a container 18 and an outer soft cover or pad 20, respectively. (see column 2, lines 64-66). Worrell is silent as to the material used to construct the container 18 or pad 20. Further, the mounting members 24 in Worrell, which are analogous to the detent elements of claim 4, do not have the two part construction identified by the Examiner. The mounting members 24 of Worrell are components separate from the container 18 and pad 20 and are constructed of metal. To allege that Worrell discloses at items 18 and 20 a multiple component detent elements comprising a multiple-component plastic in the form of a carrier material and a coating has no basis in the explicit teachings of Worrell.

Schutz and Worrell, alone or in combination, do not disclose detent elements comprising a multiple component plastic and fails cure the deficiency of Schutz.

In rejecting claim 4, the Examiner states that it would be obvious to modify the apparatus of Schutz to include a multiple-component plastic of Worrell "so as to increase the outward appearance and feel". The Examiner has not set forth any articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support this position.

It is unclear exactly what is meant by "increasing" the outward appearance and feel. The Examiner has given no reasoning or rationale as to why one having ordinary skill in the art would find it desirable to "increase" the outward appearance and feel of a detent element used to secure a generator carrier to a steering wheel. Also, the Examiner has set forth no reasoning or rationale as to why one having ordinary skill in the art would resort to a multiple-component plastic to achieve this purpose. Further, the Examiner has set forth no reasoning or rationale as to why, in view of Schutz and Worrell, one having ordinary skill in the art would provide the multiple component plastic by providing a carrier material with a coating. The rejection sets forth two references, neither of which teaches or suggest the elements recited in claim 4, and supplies the "increasing the outward appearance and feel" rationale in a conclusory manner.

In rejecting claim 4 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell, the Examiner has not identified any rational basis supporting his conclusion that detent elements comprising a multiple-component plastic in the form of a carrier material and a coating are obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell. The Examiner has not set forth any apparent reason to combine Schutz and Worrell to arrive at the gas bag module of claim 4. No explicit

analysis has been set forth and there has been no articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness.

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) fails to establish a prima facie case for obviousness because the proposed combination of Schutz and Worrell does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 4. Therefore, in view of the foregoing, the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper and should be reversed.

C. Rejection of claim 8 as being obvious over Schutz in view of Worrell

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schutz in view of Worrell. The rejection of claim 8 is improper and should be reversed for the following reasons.

Claim 8 recites a generator carrier (12) to which the gas generator (16) is fastened and which is adapted to be fastened to a vehicle steering wheel (100). The generator carrier (12) has a cup-shaped construction with a depression (14) in which the gas generator (16) is arranged. The depression (14) has an edge (22) with at least one laterally projecting section (24) that comprises the multiple-component plastic (30, 32).

Schutz and Worrell do not teach or suggest all of the elements recited in claim 8. The Examiner states that Schutz teaches all of the elements recited in claim 8, except the laterally projecting section comprising a multiple-component plastic. This clearly is not the case. Claim 8 also recites multiple-component plastic detent elements, which are not disclosed by Schutz (see section VII(A), supra.) There is nothing disclosed in Schutz that discloses that the pin can be either metallic with an

insulation on the holding surface or plastic with a metallization on the contact surface. The clear wording in Schutz is that of two alternative pin constructions, neither of which includes a multiple-component plastic. In Schutz, the construction is either: 1) insulated metal or 2) plastic with a metallized surface.

Also, in Schutz, the generator carrier, i.e., the module housing 22, is clearly shown as a single component material. Schutz makes no mention whatsoever of a multiple component plastic construction of the module housing.

Worrell does not cure this deficiency. Worrell is silent as to the material used to construct the container 18 or pad 20 and also as to how the pad is fitted to the container. To allege that Worrell discloses at items 18 and 20 a multiple-component plastic is speculative and there is no basis in Worrell from which to make this leap.

In rejecting claim 8, the Examiner's position is that a multiple-component plastic is disclosed in Worrell at 18 and 20 and, apparently, that this renders obvious both: 1) multiple-component plastic detent elements and 2) a generator carrier with a laterally projecting section that comprises a multiple-component plastic. In rejecting claim 8, the Examiner states that it would be obvious to combine the container and do "so as to increase the outward appearance and feel". The Examiner has not set forth any articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support this position.

It is unclear exactly what is meant by "increasing" the outward appearance and feel. The Examiner has given no reasoning or rationale as to why one having ordinary skill in the art would find it desirable to "increase" the outward appearance and feel of a detent element used to secure a generator carrier to a steering wheel. Further, the Examiner has set forth no reasoning or rationale as to why one having

ordinary skill in the art would resort to a multiple-component plastic to achieve this purpose. The rejection sets forth two references, neither of which teaches or suggest the elements recited in claim 8, and supplies the “increasing the outward appearance and feel” rationale in a conclusory manner. The rejection of claim 8 clearly lacks the articulated reasoning and rational underpinning required to support a finding of obviousness.

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) fails to establish a prima facie case for obviousness because the proposed combination of Schutz and Worrell does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 8. Thus, in view of the above-mentioned reasons, the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper and should be reversed.

VIII. Conclusion

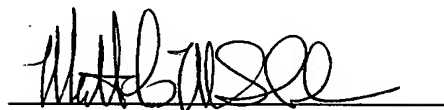
In view of the foregoing, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 3-5, 7, and 8 should be reversed. Reversal of the rejections of claims 3-5, 7, and 8 is respectfully requested.

IX. APPENDIX

Appendix A attached contains a copy of the claims on appeal.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this
Appeal Brief to Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew M. Shaheen', written over a horizontal line.

Matthew M. Shaheen
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APPENDIX A

Claims 1-2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Previously Presented) A gas bag module (10), comprising a gas generator (16) and a generator carrier (12), to which said gas generator (16) is fastened, said generator carrier (12) being adapted to be fastened to a vehicle steering wheel (100),

said generator carrier (12) having a base section (19) with detent elements (20) formed thereon, by means of which detent elements said generator carrier (12) can be fastened on a steering wheel side,

characterized in that said generator carrier (12) comprises a multiple-component plastic (30, 32), said multiple-component plastic comprising different layers of said carrier (12), and

said detent elements (20) comprising said multiple-component plastic (30, 32).

Claim 4 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module (10) according to claim 3, characterized in that said multiple-component plastic comprises a carrier material (30) and a coating (32).

Claim 5 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module (10) according to claim 3, characterized in that said generator carrier (12) has a cup-shaped construction with a depression (14) in which said gas generator (16) is arranged.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module (10) according to claim 5, characterized in that a covering cap (26) is provided, which can be inserted into said depression (14), and that said depression (14) is constructed such that said covering cap (26) closes said generator carrier (12) externally.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module (10) according to claim 5, characterized in that said depression (14) has an edge (22) with at least one section (24) formed thereon so as to project laterally.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module (10) according to claim 7, characterized in that said projecting section (24) comprises said multiple-component plastic (30, 32).

Claims 9-10 (Canceled)

Claim 11 (Previously Presented) A gas bag module (10), comprising:
a gas generator (16) and
a generator carrier (12), to which said gas generator (16) is fastened, said generator carrier (12) being adapted to be fastened to a vehicle steering wheel (100), said generator carrier (12) comprising a multiple-component plastic (30, 32), said multiple-component plastic defining different layers of said carrier (12), said generator carrier (12) having a cup-shaped construction with a depression (14) in which said gas generator (16) is arranged, and

a covering cap (26) being provided, which can be inserted into said depression (14), said depression having a rim (22), said depression (14) being constructed such that said covering cap (26) closes said generator carrier (12) externally, said covering including an upper portion, said upper portion being flat and flushed with an upper portion of said rim (22).

Claims 12-15 (Canceled)

Claim 16 (Previously Presented) The gas bag module according to claim 8 wherein said projecting section is one piece.

X. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

XI. RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.